



WHY 'ANTHROPOLOGICAL PEDAGOGY' MAY MATTER: POSITIONING 'ANTHROPOLOGICAL PEDAGOGY' AS A GAME CHANGING PARADIGM IN TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY ANTHROPOLOGY AND TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY PEDAGOGY

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ABSTRACT

This paper seeks to introduce the core objectives of 'Anthropological Pedagogy' in twenty-first century anthropology and twenty-first century pedagogy, and emphasize its importance to a broad array of readers. We expect the discipline of 'Anthropological Pedagogy' to be a distinct field of study well within the purview of Anthropology, though in a sense, it would straddle the worlds of both Anthropology and Pedagogy, and seek to promote anthropological goals through the medium of education. The objectives of this field of study, would be different from the field of Educational psychology which studies the psychology of learning, the field of 'Anthropology of Education' which is much narrower in scope, and the relatively less-known field of Pedagogical Anthropology which was proposed by Maria Montessori over a century ago, despite a possible overlap between all the above. The objective of this paper is to invite other anthropologists and researchers to contribute to what will hope will become a vibrant field of study in due course of time and will eventually enhance human welfare and well-being, particularly in the long-term through more scientifically structured education systems with ratify them with individual performance and aspirations, cultural characteristics and social goals.

KEYWORDS: Anthropology, Pedagogy, Anthropological Pedagogy, Education, Learning, Sujay Rao Mandavilli.

INTRODUCTION:

The science of teaching and learning has had a long and a chequered history. Most evidence suggests that there were no formal education systems in old-world civilizations, and education was mostly an informal, hit-and-miss affair. Formal training in some form is ascribed to various cultures and civilizations such as Mesopotamia, Egypt, China and India, even though literacy there may have been limited to small groups of people. (Rosof, 2014)

The forerunners of modern universities were set up in different countries in Europe in the eleventh and the twelfth centuries, and these evolved into Middle Age schools from which modern universities are derived. Literacy levels began to pick up in Europe and the USA in the Nineteenth century, after education was made compulsory, but the rest of the world is only now beginning to follow suit. The world has changed considerably since the dawn of globalization and the internet age, and this has increased the demand for analytical skills, problem solving skills as opposed to rote learning.

The formal study of learning and learning methods is known as pedagogy. This field of study began to take off in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, but evolved into a full-fledged science only in the twentieth century. Pedagogy covers topics such as content, teacher training and motivation, learning psychology and student motivation and is considered to be both a theoretical and an applied science.

Different learning theories and models have been proposed in pedagogy. The more important theories are the theory of Behaviorism which was developed by John Watson, B F Skinner, Clark L. Hull, Edward C. Tolman and others. The Social learning theory was based on work by Albert Bandura and Vygotsky. Constructivists on the other hand, believe that learners interpret new knowledge only on the basis of what they already know or understand. The Transfer of Learning Approach was on the other hand proposed by American psychologist Edward Lee Thorndike. The Theory of Psychodynamics was proposed by Sigmund Freud who also founded the field of psychoanalysis. (Pritchard, 2014) Various learning theories have also been developed by Jean Jacques Rousseau, John Amos Comenius, Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, Otto Friedrich Theodor Heinsius, Friedrich Froebel, Soren Kierkegaard, Max Stirner, Friedrich Nietzsche, Johann Friedrich Herbart, Immanuel Kant, Henri Bergson, Edwin R. Guthrie, Stanko Gogala, David A. Kolb and others. In the twentieth century, many new concepts in education were developed and these have included the concept of Montessori schools developed by Maria Montessori and Waldorf education which was first proposed by Rudolf Steiner.

We believe that Anthropological Pedagogy will go far ahead of Educational Psychology and Anthropology of education in integrating pedagogy with Anthropological Objectives. Anthropological Pedagogy must also be differentiated from the relatively obscure field of Pedagogical Anthropology. This field involves the study of aspects of man such as body measurement, anthropometry, craniometry, osteology etc.

We believe that the field of Anthropological Pedagogy is important for several reasons. Religious fanaticism is on the rise in different parts of the world and education has done very little to stem the rot. Superstition and blind faith continue in

many parts of the world, and even many educated Indians for example, seem to find it difficult science from pseudo-science. Even though the colonial era ended several decades ago very little has been done to develop culture and country-specific education models and teaching techniques. Very little has also been done to formulate teaching and learning in line with linguistic capability and language dynamics. The principles of Anthropological Pedagogy can also be eventually extended to develop appropriate educational models for different cultures and contexts.

MATERIALS AND METHODS:

This paper presents a high-level overview of our published work in Anthropological Pedagogy designed to reach out to specialized audiences. It also interfaces with our earlier work on Anthropological Historiography and socio-cultural dynamics. (Mandavilli, 2017, 2018)

All existing theories of learning and schools of pedagogy have also been reviewed. These have been interfaced with the theories and concepts of different branches of Anthropology such as Social and Cultural Anthropology, Linguistic Anthropology and Physical Anthropology to develop new goals and objectives and an entirely new approach.

The key objectives of Anthropological Pedagogy:

We now list out what we believe will be the various objectives of Anthropological Pedagogy. This is only an indicative list, and we expect other researchers to add to the list as more interfaces between Anthropology and Pedagogy are explored. It must also be borne in mind that the Anthropological Pedagogue plays a supplementary role, and he would need to be conversant with the latest developments in all fields of pedagogy, and collaborate with other experts in the field of education at all levels.

The first objective of Anthropological Pedagogy would be to use education as a medium to further Anthropological objectives: These objectives would include long-term societal welfare and social emancipation, and use education as a vital tool for social and cultural change. Thus, the Anthropological Pedagogue would be expected to constantly look for ways and means to use education as a tool to bring about positive change in society, and this would be his very *raison d'être*.

We had also proposed the idea of societal orientations in our paper. Examples of societal orientations would include a society's past-orientation or future-orientation, inward orientation or outward orientation, rigidity versus flexibility, individualism versus collectivism, Material versus non-material orientation, contentment versus innovation, and rational-orientation versus non rational-orientation. These could be tied to innovation in many different ways, and attempting to change the orientation of society through a suitably designed education systems would greatly boost innovation and creativity in society.

We had also proposed that there would be different types of individual mind-orientation in different societies which could be tied to innovation and creativity and different types of economic activity. Examples of such orientations would include family orientation, societal orientation, employment or business orientation, individualistic mind-orientation, religious, spiritual or mind-orientation, militant-orientation, the anarchist or queer man etc. There will be modal mind-

orientations in most societies along with outliers, and these will also be determined by the society's orientation. An Individual's thought-worlds which would constitute his mental makeup could similarly be assessed through observation, interviews, questionnaires and other tools such as Thematic Apperception tests. The advantage of this approach over studies of personality types is that they can be assessed and measured much more easily and be remediated through suitable techniques such as the creation of 'Eureka points' which can be used to trigger innovation and creativity. This approach is also multi-directional because all types of orientations, both individual and societal, can be studied and remediated, and a change in any of these would naturally impact the other. These could also be used to assess a country's socio-economic advantage when taken with linguistic and other factors, and have several other downstream implications such as economic planning. Remedial efforts could be developed based on these inputs, and this could be one input that could be used for formulating the course contents.

For example, if a society is extremely inward-looking, highlights of other outward-looking cultures could be presented to students in such a way that it triggers cognitive dissonance and brings about positive change. Another useful metric would be to understand the society's evils and ills and use these as a crucial input to design the education system. If a society is non-rational in orientation, additional efforts may need to be made to inculcate a scientific temper among students. We had also proposed that a long-term well-being of society should be prioritized while designing an education system, but short-term aspects must also be taken into account as necessary, and be merged with long-term considerations. We had also proposed the concept of mind space and learning mind space, and this would be one factor that could be taken into account while designing the education system, and fixing the course contents. For example, different thoughts and ideas would vie for attention in a learner's mind, some positive and some negative, and syllabus must be designed in such a way that it promotes positive changes in mind space in such a way that it eventually brings about a positive change in society. Thus, various aspects of the syllabus would be expected to be justified on a sound epistemological basis. This would of course be subject to other considerations, and the views of the Anthropological Pedagogist would also be expected to be taken into account, along with the feedback of the relevant domain specialists.

At the same time, the Anthropological Pedagogist would be expected to take key inputs from economic planners such as innovation indices, developmental indicators and studies of a country's competitive and comparative advantage, and see how these could be traced to the education system. These could be the basis of course corrections to the education system, if any.

Another key objective of an Anthropological Pedagogist would be to create rational individuals for the benefit of society, and look for ways and means to counter superstition and dogma. Students may also be trained on science and pseudo-science, thus setting the stage for a more rational society. This, would serve as an antidote for social ills, and promote creativity and innovation. For example, the origins of Indian culture may be explained logically and convincingly to students as this would help counter age-old myths. These could be designed by using a list of pseudo-scientific beliefs or quasi-scientific beliefs as a starting point.

Another objective of the Anthropological Pedagogist would be to promote the 'Sociology of science'. The 'sociology of science' may be defined as the ability of specific scientific teaching, models and frameworks to bring about paradigm shifts in society, and counter social evils and ills by promoting a greater awareness of such ills and a greater awareness of other cultures.

Another objective of an Anthropological Pedagogist is to promote a just and equitable society. One way to do this is to bridge the unnatural gap that exists between various socio-economic groups. He may understand the learning proclivities of various socio-economic groups based on their cultural and economic backgrounds, assess their performance and handicaps, and suggest remediation plans for each group. This approach could further be extended to understand the economic opportunities available for different groups as this could be used to develop vocational training programs for instance. The Anthropological Pedagogist must also try to bridge the gap between developed and developing countries in educational achievement, while at the same time trying to develop education programs that are culturally compatible with the needs of different cultures and societies. At the same time, he would also be expected to carry of a health check of the competence of the intellectual class and the creative class which is essential for a society's well-being.

Another key objective of an Anthropological Pedagogist would be to provide a counter-weight to political constructs as decisions are often taken by politicians who have no background in education. This can be done for example, by raising awareness among specialists and the general public. The Anthropological Pedagogist may also create awareness about the state of the education system and its flaws among intellectuals and others, and use it as a platform to bring about meaningful change. This would be necessary to gradually eliminate vested interests and to build a consensus. This may eventually be expected beyond national boundaries, as awareness is created in less developed countries.

The Anthropological Pedagogist may also provide his expertise in evaluating and assessing new educational models and perspectives. He will be able to do this because of his expertise on culture, theories of learning, and linguistics particularly theories of first and second language learning, the dynamics of language, patterns of usage of language and sociolinguistics. He may contribute meaningfully to the resolution of controversial issues such as the medium of instruction which is particularly important for countries such as India. We had discussed the dynamics of language in our previously published papers. (Mandavilli, 2016, 2017)

He is also expected to use his knowledge of Physical Anthropology to assess the learning capacity of students. This is particularly important is the assessment of course contents. He may also help in the implementation of new frameworks introduced elsewhere, by assessing cultural gaps and barriers.

The Anthropological Pedagogist is also expected to carry out fieldwork to assess different aspects of education. This would constitute a crucial component of his work as Ethnography and fieldwork is the bread and butter of an Anthropologist, and he is familiar with techniques such as participant observation.

Long-term quality assessment and educational trends can also be assessed through suitably designed techniques, and this would constitute another important function of an Anthropological Pedagogist.

The Anthropological Pedagogist would also be expected to aid in the processes of Enculturation, Acculturation and cultural adaptation by utilizing his expertise on various aspects of Cultural Anthropology. This would be necessary in today's globalized and interconnected world.

He would also be expected to contribute to real-world problems that students face. Examples of these include violence, substance abuse, absenteeism and school dropout rates by analyzing the root cause of such problems.

He would be expected to play a crucial role in promoting cultural adaptation and applying the goals of cultural ecology through the medium of education. For example, the dangers of deforestation and long-term water scarcity along with possible solutions may be explained to students.

The Anthropological Pedagogist would also be expected to play some role in linking educational models to economic development models. He can do this because the cultural characteristics and cultural competence of a country can be assessed in addition to competitive and comparative advantage. He can also play a role in Corporate Anthropology by devising suitable training programs taking into account cultural aspects and linguistic abilities of learners.

The Anthropological Pedagogist would be expected to play a role in the collection of short-term and long-term metrics that could be expected to play a role in the development of meaningful education systems. Examples of these include metrics on dropout rates, Social Impact Assessment of various education systems, studies linking educational models to innovation and creativity indices, as assessment of long-term trends in learning abilities etc. The Anthropological Pedagogist must play a pro-active role in the collection of metrics as this would constitute and important are of research methodology, an issue that an Anthropologist is well-trained in.

CONCLUSION:

We have listed out what we believe to be the core functions of Anthropological Pedagogy. We believe that this could be an exciting and a promising new field with a lot of potential. However, any field of study would require the critical inputs of other specialists in the field. The Author invites other scholars to comment and critique these proposals so that a healthy and a meaningful debate can be achieved.

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